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FROM A
GENTLEMAN
IN THE
COUNTRY,
TO A
MEMBER
OF
PARLIAMENT.

DUBLIN:

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A
LETTER

FROM A
Gentleman in the Country,

TO A
Member of PARLIAMENT.

SIR,



T is with Pleasure we hear, that you, Gentlemen, who attend the Service of your Country in Parliament, are, at this Time, under no Difficulty to find out Ways and Means to answer new Exigencies of State, nor at any Trouble to redress Grievances in the Management of our national Affairs; and we think we cannot be too profuse in our Acknowledgments for the many inestimable Blessings we enjoy under the present Administration. But, as his Majesty and his Ministers make

our Ease and Happiness their constant Aim, and you have it, almost every Session, recommended from the Throne, to consult of Means which may contribute thereunto; so, it seemeth incumbent on you, Gentlemen of the House of Commons, to give your Assistance to every Thing that may conduce to the Prosperity of your Country: It is hoped, therefore, you will not take amiss, if animated with the Desire of rendering some Service to the Publick, I put you in Mind of an Article of Business, which is almost totally neglected amongst us; and yet, if it were attended to, might be cultivated to the general Advantage of the Kingdom.

As my Purpose is, rather to put you in Mind of this Article of Business, than to enter into a full Disquisition of its Nature and Utility, so, perhaps, it were sufficient to mention the Mines of Metal and Coal, with which this Kingdom is known to abound, and which are now useless, not so much through our Indolence, as for want of Means to work them. However, it may not be altogether amiss to give some general Hints of the Matter, and to shew, that the opening of those hidden Stores, will be a sure Way to acquire Riches to the Nation, and to give Employment to Multitudes of our Poor.

Notwith-



Notwithstanding it be an incontestable Truth, that *Ireland* aboundeth with Metals and Minerals, yet, if you will look into the Custom-House Books, you will find the Value of Copper, Lead, Iron, and Coal, annually imported into this Kingdom, amounts to a very considerable Sum of Money, which might be saved by a prudent Management of our native Stock; whereby we should transfer to our Inhabitants, the Employments, which those of other Countries have, in raising out of the Bowels of the Earth, and in preparing those Commodities for a Market, and in transporting of them hither, to answer our Necessities and Luxury.

Moreover, you may please to observe, that many other Trades are necessarily attendant upon the Improvement of Mines; for all those who are employed, in raising and refining of Oars, and in preparing Tools and Utenfils for these Workmen, must be supplied with Food, Raiment, and Housing, which will multiply the Trade and Business of the People. A sure Way of encreasing the Inhabitants of any Country whatsoever. And, if you will take a further Prospect into your View, you may perceive, that by opening those Veins of hidden Treasure, we may be enabled to supply other Countries with several Kinds
of

of Metals and Manufactures ; and then, it is believed, you will be convinced, that this is a Business worthy the Attention of the Legislature.

It is true there are some Mines of Copper, Lead, and Coal, already opened in this Kingdom ; but they are so very few, and these few are carried on after such a Manner, as sheweth our Inability, I mean the Inability of private Persons (for I am far from ascribing their Neglect of this Affair to Laziness) to prosecute this Business with Success. It therefore, seems to call upon the collective Body of the Nation, to assist Undertakings of this Kind, which are of such general Use. And, it is submitted to your Judgment, whether any Time can be more seasonable for Considerations of this Nature, than the present, when you are at full Leisure to employ your Thoughts towards the Improvement of your Country ; and, when the Situation of Affairs require, that we more diligently labour to enlarge our native Stock, in order to enable us to bear, with more Ease, those Shocks and Events, which are attendant upon, even the most successful Wars.

The Benefits which have accrued to the Publick, from the Aid formerly granted to the Undertakers of the Colliery at *Ballycastle*, abundantly prove, that good Effects
result

result from such Applications of publick Money. And it is not doubted, but the Sums of Money lately granted, for making a convenient Harbour near that Colliery, will enlarge those Benefits. But, in all your Consultations upon the Improvement of this Colliery, and for opening an Inland Navigation, between *Newry* and *Lough-Neigh*, the chief Point, which seems to have been in View, is, the supplying of *Dublin* with Coal, at a reasonable Rate. This, is, most certainly, of general Advantage, as it supplieth a large Consumption, keeps the Price of imported Coals at a moderate Rate, and saves great Sums of Money, which must otherwise be carried out of the Kingdom. However, as wise Legislatures, will always have the Inhabitants of the most remote Parts of their Country, as well in their View, as those who live in their Capital City. And, as it is evident many other Parts of this Kingdom are destitute of Fuel, so it is submitted to your Consideration, whether it be not reasonable to contrive Means to procure this Conveniency to the Nation in general, without confining your Thoughts too rigidly to any particular Part thereof. Thus, the Encouragement for working of Mines ought to be general, although the same Method of Encouragement may not

not be applicable to every Kind of Mine, or to every Place where Mines are, or to every Person who undertakes to work them. For Instance, it is deemed a sufficient Encouragement to open Mines of Coal on the Borders of *Lough-Neigh*, that a Canal be made, at the publick Expence, between that great Water and the Sea, whereby a Vent will be given to the Coals that may be raised. Whereas it hath been found necessary to encourage the Colliery of *Bally-Castle*, by granting Money, not only to enable the Undertakers to prosecute that Work with Effect, but also, to build a convenient Harbour for the Reception of Ships, which may carry the Coals to Market. And in other Parts of the Kingdom, other Methods of Encouragement may be found necessary; so that it appears impossible to lay down a general Rule, which may take in every Man's Case, and answer every Part of the Kingdom where Metals and Minerals may be found. But, it is believed that all Men will agree to this Proposition; that the Improvement of Mines, is a general Benefit, and well deserveth publick Encouragement.

If smelting and refining Houses were erected at the publick Expence in convenient Parts of the Kingdom, and they were supply'd with sufficient Numbers of Men,

Men, well skilled in those Trades, who should be obliged at reasonable Rates, to reduce to fine Copper, all the Copper Oar that should be brought to them; can it be denied that this would prove a great Encouragement to the working of Copper Mines? Would it not introduce a new Consumption of our native Coals, and of many other native Commodities? Would it not obstruct the Exportation of large Sums of Money annually carried into other Countries, for Copper, and for Manufactures made of this rich Metal? And, might we not hope in Time, to export Copper and Brass to other Countries? These are Benefits which would abundantly recompence an Application of publick Money.

It were needless, Sir, to mention the Necessity of Fuel among us, our Food, Comfort and Trade absolutely depending upon it: It will therefore, be a great Benefit, to render this Conveniency general to the whole Society, and publick Money carefully expended for this Purpose, will be returned with great Encrease to the common Stock of the Nation.

It is not necessary to enumerate the Benefits that naturally accrue to a Nation from Improvements in Trade. The wonderful Effects of Commerce are no longer a Mystery. All wise Legislators take Commerce into
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their immediate Care, and have it in constant Contemplation how it may be improved in its several Branches; we of this Kingdom have but very few Articles of Commerce which we can extend, wherefore we ought to be more assiduous in improving those few wherein we have Liberty to exert our Industry: And, as I confine myself at this Time, to the Article of Mines, I submit to your Judgement, what I have said on this Subject; and it only remains to mention some Things which may be of Use in forwarding this beneficial Article of Commerce among us.

As Family Settlements frequently obstruct the Improvement of Lands, and the building of Houses, when they are attended with Expences, too great for a Father of a Family, who is barely Tenant for Life, to run into; so they often prevent the opening of Mines, for it frequently happens, that Mines are discovered on the Lands of Persons, who, by Family Settlements, are discouraged from prosecuting the Work, and are incapable to give others who would undertake it, such a Term, as might encourage them thereunto. This Obstruction is, in some Measure, removed by the Stat. 10. Geo. I. C. 5. and it may admit of a further general Remedy, but the Impediments arising from low Circumstances, which

which render all Men incapable of prosecuting great Undertakings, and from the particular Situation of Mines, which may perhaps, require Levels and other Works, which would be of Use not only to the first Undertaker, but to neighbouring Lands; whose Proprietors will not perhaps, contribute to the Expence, are of such a Nature, as will not admit of general Remedies: And yet the Publick ought not to be deprived of the Advantages which might result from such Undertakings. Wherefore it is submitted to your Consideration, whether the Publick ought not to contribute towards obtaining those Advantages which are of general Use to the Society.

If an annual Fund were appropriated to this Purpose, and it were vested in Trustees for the Improvement of Mines and Minerals, might we not expect great Advantages from such an Institution? Experience shews, that very great Benefits arise from publick Encouragements. It is a Method of promoting and cherishing Industry, which is practised by many wise Legislators. But not to look out for foreign Examples, we have before our Eyes, the wonderful Progress made in our Linnen Manufacture, by a prudent Distribution of the Fund vested in the Trustees appointed for the Improvement of this Branch of Commerce. A Set of
Gentlemen

Gentlemen, who well deserve the highest Commendations, and will always merit the most grateful Acknowledgements of this Nation, for their prudent Administration of the Trust reposed in them. And, since this is the Case of the only Trust of this Nature, tryed among us; may it not be expected that other Persons, of equal Skill and Integrity, are to be found, to execute a Trust for the Improvement of Mines?

Perhaps it may be useful to divide this Trust into provincial Boards, since it will be necessary that the Trustees should be more intimately acquainted, with the Situation of Places, and with the Circumstances of People, than a general Set of Gentlemen, constantly meeting in *Dublin*, can ever be.

This and many other Points, relative to the Execution of the Trust, must be submitted to your Consideration; but I beg leave to observe, that the Fund which will be necessary to carry on this Business, need not be so large, as perhaps at first View, may seem necessary for so great an Undertaking. For it ought not to be expected that the Money issued to enable Persons to prosecute such Undertakings, should be in all Cases, lost to the Fund; since it is but reasonable, that if the Work succeed, the Mine should remain in the Hands of the Trustees

(13)
Trustees, to secure the Repayment of the
Expences they were at, with some additional
Profit to compensate for the Risk of
loosing the Money they laid out upon it.

It would draw this Letter into too great
a Length, if I entered into all the Regu-
lations which may appear useful in the Pro-
secution of this Affair; and as I have under-
taken only, to mention generally, those
Things, which your better Judgment may
digest and improve into a Form fit for Prac-
tice, I will here conclude with assuring you
that I am, with all Submission,

30th of Oc-
tober, 1739

Sir,

Your O^bd^t

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